Vol. VIII. Numb. 21

THE OBSERVATOR.

More Remarks on the Negotiations for a general Peace; and the ill Circumſtances of France, *as to Proviſions and Money. Farther Arguments for reſtoring the States of* France *to their ancient Power, as the moſt effectual Way to ſecure the Ballance of* Europe, *ſince the Power of all her neighbouring Governments is limited.*

From Saturday, April 9. to Wednesday, April 12. 1709.

Obſ. HOW goes the Treaty now, *Roger?* Shall we have Peace or War?

Country-m. You don't take me for a Conjurer, Maſter; how ſhould I know? You muſt ask the Great Men that Queſtion, or conſult *Partridge* and other Aſtrologers.

Obſ. I had as good conſult thee as the latter, *Roger*; for thou can'ſt know as much by looking to thy Plow-ſhare, as they can do by the Stars. But what does the publick News, and the People of the Town, ſay about it?

Country-m. juſt as they us'd to do, Maſter; one Thing one Day, and another the next. Some of the People are for Peace Abroad, and War at Home, and more intent upon their Party-Quarrels, than the Affairs of the Publick; ſo that for any Thing I can ſee, Whig and Tory is like to be as fatal a Diſtinction among us, as Guelphs and Gibilins was formerly to the *Germans* and *Italians*; for Names are more minded, than Things; ſo that Faction has got the Aſcendant of Truth and Honeſty. Then as to the publick News, we are told, that the *French* King thinks the Propoſals of the Allies too hard; and therefore is not like to comply with them. However, they ſay, he has ſent his laſt Anſwer to the *Hague* by the Preſident *Rouille*'s Secretary, and that Deputies from the States of *Holland* have had a Conference with the Duke of *Marlborough* upon the Subject.

Obſ. Very well, *Roger*. But what does the publick News ſay, as to the State of the *French* King's Affairs? How goes it in *France* as to Money and Proviſions?

Country-m. Very bad for *Lewis* the XIVth, Maſter; if we may believe the repeated Advices that come over in foreign Prints and Letters, his Country is full of Tumults for Want of Bread; ſo that in ſome Places the People have broke up his Magazines, and intercepted his Veſſels with Corn and Proviſions, and his Bankers are turn'd Bankrupt; but he takes Care to keep his Commiſſions for enquiring into Bankruptcies out of his *Gazette*; he does not ſuffer his *Gazetteer* to diſcover the Nakedneſs of his Country, for the Lucre of Advertiſements.

Obſ. Where there's ſo much Smoak, there's always ſome Fire, *Roger*. The People muſt be reduc'd to a very great Degree of Deſperation, when under ſuch an abſolute Government as his, they dare break open his Magazines, and intercept his Veſſels with Corn and Proviſions. This, together with his Obſtinacy in refuſing the Demands of the Allies, looks as if, by the righteous Judgment of God, his Heart were harden'd like that of *Pharaoh*, that the divine Juſtice may execute Revenge upon him and his Subjects, for the Tyranny, Perjury, Oppreſſion, Bloodſhed, Rapine, and Perſecution they have been guilty of, againſt their own Country-men, and all the other Nations in *Europe*. 'Twould ſeem, that he will not yet take Notice, that his *Agypt* is deſtroy'd, nor ſhew the leaſt Regard to the Miſery and Deſolation of his Country, and the Rebukes that Providence has given him by the Defeats of his Armies, the Loſs of the ſtrongeſt of his Conqueſts, the threatning of his Life by Diſtempers, and the brandiſhing of the Sword of the Confederates, which is drawn over the Heads of himſelf and his diſpirited Subjects; ſo that to me it ſeems plain, that Heaven has mark'd him out for Deſtruction; but if the Confederates let him go with any Thing of his unjuſt Conqueſts, and particularly with *Sicily*, *Naples*, *Sardinia*, &c. the divine Juſtice may, in all Probability, revenge it on the Confederates, as it did *Iſrael*'s unſeaſonable Peace with the *Syrians*, by which their Lives, and that of their Prince, went for the Lives of *Benhadad* and his Subjects, as we have mention'd before.

Country-m. But hold, Maſter, ſome People ſay you are for breaking the Ballance of *Europe*; and that if *France* be brought too low, the Houſe of *Auſtria* will ſoon rite too high.

Obſ. Thoſe People ſpeak before they think, *Roger*. Were the Houſe of *Bourbon* once reduc'd as low as the Houſe of *Auſtria*, I would be for holding as well as they; but that is far from being the Caſe. The *Spaniſh* Branch of the Houſe of *Auſtria* has ſcarce ſo much as a Root left, the Branch of the Houſe of *Bourbon* has quite over-ſpread it; and *Lewis* the XIVth is ſo little apprehenſive of any Danger from the Imperial Branch of the Houſe of *Auſtria*, that if we may believe the publick News, he is with-drawing a great Body of his Troops from *Spain*, and threatens not only to make Head againſt us in the *Netherlands*, but to attack the *German* Branch of *Auſtria* in their own Dominions, with a formidable Army; againſt which I find little or no Proviſion made. The Emperor has his Hands ſo full with the *Hungarian* Malecontents, that he is ſcarce ſecure from their Inſults in his Capital of *Vienna*. Beſides, he has no great Reaſon to truſt much to the Fidelity of his Neighbours the *Turks*, and has but little Ground to rely on the Fidelity of many of his Subjects the *Germans*, who ſeem to have ſo little Regard to the Remonſtrances of his Imperial Majeſty and his Allies, or indeed to their own Safety, that rather than pay the Sums demanded, and which they are oblig'd by the Conſtitution of the Empire to pay towards the Military Cheſt, they incline rather to let the *French* raiſe treble the Sum, as they have formerly done by Military Execution; and the Emperor is ſo far from an abſolute Power to force them to it, that his Circumſtances have not hitherto allow'd him to make Uſe of that legal Power with which he is veſted by the Conſtitution of the Empire, to oblige them to pay it. Then for his own hereditary Dominions, we perceive that *Hungary* and *Tranſilvania* have not only deny'd his Title, but dethron'd him, and maintain their Pretenſions againſt him by the Sword: And for the other Part of them, they conſiſt of ſo many diſtinct Sovereignties, and he is ſo much limited by their ſeveral Dyets and States, that he cannot make his Will their Law; and indeed they have been ſo much exhauſted by a long War with the *Turks* and the *French*, that there's not the leaſt Shadow of Reaſon to dread an Exceſs of his Power; which is a plain Demonſtration to me, that there's a great deal of Malice, if not of ſomething that's worſe, in thoſe Suggeſtions that have been lately raiſ'd againſt the Power of the Houſe of *Auſtria*.

Country-m.

Country-m. You have satisfy'd me in that Matter long ago, Master; therefore I think *Europe* can never be safe, 'till *France* be not only stript of all the Conquests she has made since the Treaty of the *Pyrenees*, but 'till the Power of her States be also restor'd, and that their Monarchy be as much limited, as that of the House of *Austria*. Pray, Master, let me have some more of your Thoughts upon that Subject.

Obj. I am not alone in that Opinion, *Roger*. The ingenious Author of *The Desolation and Ruin of* France *demonstrated*, who is a Person of Quality of that Country, Grandson to the Great *du Plessis Mornay*, and one that by his Writings appears to understand Politicks, and the Interest of his Country very well, says expresly, that nothing but that can possibly restore *France* to any Measure of Prosperity, tho' it will take a long Time first: Therefore, if those Gentlemen who are against reducing *France* too low, for fear of losing the Ballance of *Europe* be true to their own Scheme, they must fall in with this Proposal; for if the Monarchy of *France* be left in its absolute Power under the Management of a single Person, the Country, which is so much exhausted of Men and Money already, must fall into such a Decay by a despotick Government, that they must necessarily either sink into the lowest Degree of Poverty and Weakness, or with Sword in Hand, under the Conduct of their arbitrary Prince, and the many brave Generals she has still left, invade their Neighbours in Shoals after the Peace, as the *Goths*, *Huns*, and *Vandals* did formerly, rather than lie starving under Poverty and Famine at Home; for they have no other Way left to find their Account in the absolute Power of their Monarch, but to share with him in the Spoils of their Neighbours, to whom they have free Access on all Sides, while their own Frontiers are still secur'd by numerous and strong Garrisons, besides the great naval Power they have to make Use of against all those who trade by Sea, and to infest their Neighbours by Descents and Piracies. Whereas, were the Power of their States restor'd, they would naturally think of improving their Country, and after such a ruinous War, endeavour to taste the Sweets of Peace, by cultivating their Lands, and sitting peaceably under their own Vines; they would bethink themselves, in all Probability, of Methods to re-people their Country, by allowing the Marriage of their secular and regular Clergy; by turning out those idle Drones of Monks and Nuns, who consume their Substance, hinder their Propagation, and debauch their Morals, and make them useful to the Publick, by working for their Livelyhood, in planting Vineyards, and improving Manufactures; by which *France* would be able to consume more of our Product, and that of their other Neighbours, than they do at present; which will enlarge Trade, instead of diminishing it: And I make bold to say, *Roger*, that such a Limitation of the *French* Monarchy, and the restoring of the Cortes or States of *Spain*, when that Kingdom is again put into the Hands of the other Branch of the House of *Austria*, to me seems a better Security for the Ballance of *Europe*, than any Alliance we can propose after the Peace is concluded. But more of this another Time.

☞ *The Gentlemen that sent Letters directed for the Author of this Paper, about the irregular Practices of a certain Clergy-man, and the pressing of a Man that is not within the Act, are desir'd to send Word how the Truth of the Facts may be prov'd, otherwise there will be no Notice taken of 'em.*

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